By Nicholas Bre

Say, I was sicke, and he did send me health,
I was in prison, and he did set me free:
And I was poore, and he did send me wealth,
And I was blind, and he did make me see;
I was perplext, and he did heale my paine,
And being dead, he gaue me life againe.

When I was lame, he did my limbes restore,
When I was deafe, he made me heare his voyce:
When I was wounded, he did heale my sore,
When I was sad, he made my soule reioyce:
When I had sinn'd, he would not yet forsake me;
When I was lost, he did to mercy take me.

To say yet more what he hath done for me,
I needs must say, his goodnesse hath no end,
Who, when on earth he saw no friend to me,
Did make me feele I had a heauenly friend:
A heauenly friend, whose helpe doth faile me neuer,
But is my comfort and my King for euer.

This is my Lord, my Life, and all my Loue,
My liuing Loue, and louing Life indeed,
This is the blessing of my best behoue,
The sacred fruit whereon I sweetly feed:
This is the ioy that makes my heart to sing,
Honour and glory to my heauenly King.

A ſolemne Paſsion *of the* Soules *Loue.*

Oh King, more glorious then the World can know thee!
From whom the day, euen from on high doth ſpring,
Where glorious workes vnto the World doe ſhew thee,
Of glorious loue the euerlaſting King:
The King of life, in whom the Soule doth proue
The higheſt glory of the heauenly Loue.

By whoſe high hands were all things made at firſt,
By whoſe deepe Wiſdome they are gouern'd ſtill,
By whom alone are bleſſed or accurſt,
That loue his Word, or diſobey his Will:
By whoſe ſweet breath they liue that doe attend him,
And by whoſe wrath they dye that doe offend him.

For who can bide the fury of his ire?
Or halfe conceiue the comfort of his loue?
Who plagues his foes with an infernall fire,
And plants his ſeruants in the Heauen aboue:
Who ſhakes the heau'ns, and makes the mountains bow,
If he but once begin to knit his brow.

And where he loues, what will he leaue to doe,
To make the Soule acquainted with his kindneſſe?
And with what ioy will hee the Spirit woo,
To ſhunne the woes that grow of worldly blindneſſe?
What paine, or griefe, or death did hee refuſe,
To ſaue their liues that he did ſweetly chuſe?

Now

Now for the greatneſſe of his glorious power:
He is Almightie, and all glorie his,
He made the yeere, the moneth, day, night and hower,
The Heau'ns, Earth, Sea, and what in them there is:
In him alone doth all their beeing ſtand,
And liue and dye in his almighty hand.

He ſpake the Word, and by his Word they were,
And all was good his ſecret wiſdome did,
His Will did worke his fauour without feare,
And not a thought is from his knowledge hid:
He knowes the heart, and ſearcheth through the reines,
And ſees the roots, euen of the ſmaleſt veines.

He deckt the Skie with Sunne, and Moone, and Starres,
And made the Seas to flowe vpon the Sand,
Vpon whoſe ſhore his hand did ſet the barres,
They ſhall not paſſe to ouerflow the Land.
Amid the Ayre he hath diſperſt the Clouds,
And onely Man within his mercie ſhrouds.

Within the Depth the Fiſh their holes doe keepe,
And in the Rockes the Cony keepes his houe,
Into the Earth the crawling Wormes doe creepe,
And hollow Rockes are harbour for the Mouſe.
The Lion keepes his den, the Bird his neſt,
And Man alone doth but in mercie reſt.

Yet theſe and all are guided by his power,
And may not paſſe the paſſage he hath giuen them;
The Sunne his courſe, the Moone muſt know her hower,
And clouds muſt wander but where winds haue driuen thé,
Beaſts know their times, and Fiſhes know their Tides,
And Man alone in onely mercy bides.

To tell of wonders by his wiſedome wrought,
Euen from the greateſt to the very leaſt,
Which time declares by true experience taught,
In Fiſh, in Fowle, in Bird, in Man, in Beaſt;
Marke but the power that doth in each abide,
And how it weakens in their higheſt pride.

The Lyon, firſt, is fearefull of a Bee,
The Elephant doth dread a little Mouſe,
A crowing Cocke the Dragon may not ſee,
The ſtouteſt Eagle ſubieſt to the Louſe:
The greateſt Oxe a little taint-worme killeth,
And many a man a little Canker ſpilleth.

Yet is the Lyon feared for his force,
The Elephant a huge and mighty beaſt,
The fiery Dragon kils without remorſe,
And Eagles carry Lambes vnto their neſt.
The Oxe the taint-worme vnder foot doth tread,
And Man ſometimes doth kill the Cankers head.

ut when that power begins to gather pride,
hen ſee the ſtrength of the Almighty hand,
y whoſe high helpe the weakeſt things are tride,
o ſpoile the ſtrength wherein the ſtrongeſt ſtand:
That they may know there is a Power on hie,
In whom they liue, and at his pleaſure die.

o ſhew examples of the heauenly might,
gainſt the pride of the inferiour power,
he word of Truth doth giue a glorious light,
Where may be ſeene in minute of an howre,
How greateſt ſtayes that on their ſtrength were grounded,
With headlong falls were vtterly confounded.

low *Pharaoh* firſt, the proud Egyptian King,
hat would not ſuffer Iſrael to paſſe,
What plagues and griefes did the Almighty bring
pon the houſe, euen where his lodging was?
Frogs, Flyes, and Lyce, did freely make their way
Into the Chamber where proud *Pharaoh* lay.

A number plagues the Lord did further threaten,
His land was ſtrucken with a darkeſome feare,
His Graſſe and Corne by Graſhoppers was eaten,
The Plague deſtroy'd his people euery where:
At laſt himſelfe amidſt his Army crowned,
Was in a moment in the red Sea drowned.

Yet through theſe Seas his hand did make the way
Where all his ſeruants went, and wet no foot,
Which proues, his loue was his Electeds ſtay,
While Rebell hearts were torne vp by the root:
Which true example to the world may proue.
The glorious greatneſſe of his power and loue.

Goliah boaſted greatly of his ſtrength,
Yet little *Dauid* kild him with a ſtone:
The *Madian* Hoſt was ſtrong, but yet at length,
By *Gidcons* hand the Kings were ouerthrowne.
By change of tongues fell *Babylons* great Tower,
And Chriſt his Word did breake the Deuils power.

Yet in it ſelfe what weaker is then water,
Which dround King *Pharaoh* and his mighty Hoſt?
A Louſe or Flie is of a little matter,
Yet with ſuch wormes are men tormented moſt.
What ſtrength, alas, is in a little ſtone?
Yet ſo we reade *Goliah* ouerthrowne.

Know then from whence this wonder-power groweth,
But from the force of the Almightie hand,
Which to the World his glorious power ſheweth,
When with the weake the ſtrongeſt cannot ſtand:
King *Dauid* wrote, and it is truely knowne,
That power belongeth vnto God alone.

To proue the proweſſe of the heauenly power,
How many more examples may be ſhowne?
There is no day, no yeere, no night, nor hower,
But ſome ſuch action to the world is knowne:
That truth may well vnto his glory ſpeake,
God is of power, and all the world is weake.

But ſince the world cannot the bookes containe,
Wherein his workes of wonder may be writ,
To admiration let his power remaine,
And ſay, All powers are ſubiect vnto it:
And let me of his loue and mercie write,
Which is the ſubſtance of my ſoules delight.

This powerfull Loue, the glory of all grace,
When he had wrought the World vnto his will,
And planted each thing in his proper place,
And in the courſe that they continue ſtill,
Of all the Works that he in wonder wrought,
Made onely Man the deareſt of his thought.

For what he made, he made but man to ſerue,
And man to ſerue his onely ſacred Loue;
And in his loue, doth ſo mans life preſerue,
As may the comfort of his care approue:
And ſo approue, as may this ſentence giue,
His onely loue doth make the Soule to liue.

He loued the earth, when he did giue it life,
He loued the life, when he his image gaue it,
He loued the fleſh, that made the bone, a wife,
He loued the ſoule, when he from death did ſaue it:
He loued him euer, yet he loued him moſt,
To fetch him home, when he himſelfe had loſt.

Come Poets, ye that fill the world with fancies,
Whoſe fayning Muſes ſhew but madding fits,
Which all too ſoone doe fall into thoſe franzies,
That are begotten by miſtaking wits:
Lay downe your lines, compare your loue with mine,
And ſay whoſe vertue is the true diuine.

For further tryall, let me giue you leaue
To adde a truth vnto your idle ſtories,
Wherewith ſo oft you doe the world deceiue,
And gaine your ſelues but ill-conceited glories;
Yet when you ſee where ſweeteſt ſights are ſhowne,
Looke on my Loue, and bluſh to ſee your owne.

With ſunny Beauties let your loues be bleſt,
The Sunne doth fetch his light but from my Loue;
You haue your wonders from the Phœnix neſt,
Mine honour liues but in the heauens aboue:
Your Muſes doe your Ladies praiſes ſing,
The Angels ſing in glory of my King.

ne earth, alas, from whence your loues receiue
eir Flowers and ſweets, their Pearles & precious Stones,
o decke themſelues, with which they doe deceiue
he blinded ſpirits of the little ones:
This earth, from whence their outward graces ſpring,
Is but the footſtoole of my heauenly King.

nd if he ſo hath deckt the Earth below,
nagine then the glory of his ſeat,
Which may perſwade, where Angels tremble ſo,
or humane eyes the glory is too great:
For where the Sunne, the Moone and Starres haue light,
For Natures eyes the beauty is too bright.

nd who doth liue that euer ye did loue,
ut that ye could their faireſt faire vnfold?
nd my faire Loue, let faireſt truth approue,
o eye can liue in glory to behold.
Your cleareſt beauty is with age declining,
My Loues bright glory is for euer ſhining.

f ye be wiſe, thinke where true wiſedome liueth,
nd then allow the honour to my Loue:
f yours be kind, thinke who the comfort giueth,
nd know the Turkey from the Turtle Doue:
If conſtant yours that truth let my Loue try,
Who loſt his life to ſaue his Loue thereby.

And let me ſee, how liueth all your loue,
But on deſert, the ſtay of all your ſtate,
And in my Loue a further life approue,
Who lou'd indeed, when he had cauſe to hate:
Your fancies oft for want of fauour ſtarue,
But my loue doth both yours and mine preſerue.

Then truely ſay, whom chiefe your loues doe chuſe,
To caſt the counténance of their fauours on,
Then whom againe they wholly doe refuſe,
In liking thought, as moſt to looke vpon:
Then doe but looke vpon my Loue his choice,
And whoſe heart moſt he maketh to reioyce.

The wealthy, mighty, wiſe, and well at eaſe,
Doe fit the fancies of your Ladies beſt:
But poore, and weake, and ſimple ſoules beſt pleaſe
My heauenly Loue, to labour in his breſt:
And whom the World doth vtterly refuſe,
Thoſe doth my Loue vnto his fauour chuſe.

And ſee what power is in your loning natures,
To take or giue what ye may gaine or loſe,
And ye ſhall ſee they are but my Loues creatures,
Whoſe liues are at his power to diſpoſe:
And while your fauours all doe fade away,
My ſweet Loues bleſſing neuer will decay.

Coul

uld ye conceiue the ſmalleſt of the ſweet,
at doth deſcend from my ſoules deareſt Loue,
on the faith that falleth at his feet,
at doth in prayer, but in mercie proue:
And you will blot out euery idle line,
And yeeld your ſoules vnto this Loue of mine.

ompare a weed vnto a wholſome flowre,
cloudy euening to a ſunny Day,
foggy miſt vnto an Aprill ſhoure,
ouember blaſt vnto a bloome of May,
And you ſhall eaſily ſee the difference plaine,
Betwixt my ſunſhine, and your ſhoure of raine.

ompare meere folly to the fineſt wit,
he coorſeſt copper to the pureſt gold;
he healthfull body with an Ague fit,
nd ſet the youthfull age againſt the old,
The Rauens foule note to Philomela's voice,
And quickly ſay which is the better choice.

ompare foule Pride to faire humility,
kinde diſcretion to a dogged nature,
he clowniſh Race to true Gentility,
bleſſed Angell to a curſed creature,
Fauours to frownes, and ſmilings vnto ſcowles,
And ſay the Phœnix makes all birds but Owles.

His

Compare the earth vnto the heauens on hie,
The Spirits treaſures vnto fleſhly toyes,
The pibble ſtone vnto the Azure Skie,
The woes of men vnto the Angels ioyes:
The loweſt weakneſſe vnto th'higheſt powers;
Then ſee the diffrence 'twixt my Loue and yours.

And when you ſee how all ſweet bleſſings grow,
But from the ground of my Loues liuing grace,
And doe againe the imperfection know,
Wherein you do your fond affection place,
Then all your titles to this truth reſigne;
There is no life but in this Loue of mine.

And giue me leaue to praiſe my Princely Loue,
Although my wits are ſhort of ſuch a worth,
And let my Spirit in my paſſions proue,
What his high hand in mercy will bring forth:
And write but truth, that may be truely proued,
My onely Loue, all onely to be loued.

Before all times, all thoughts, all things, he was,
And euer is, and will be aye the ſame,
That doth in wonder, wonders wonder paſſe,
In Truths high triumph of eternall fame:
Where life and loue, in grace and glory crown'd,
Do ſway the Scepter of the Heauens renown'd.

Now what he was, cannot be comprehended,
Who in himſelfe doth all things comprehend,
And when that all things ſhall be fully ended,
Himſelfe, his Word, his Will ſhall neuer end:
Whoſe gracious life, all glorious loue beginning,
Doth adde all grace, and endleſſe glory winning.

And of his eſſence this is all we find,
A Spirit fully incomprehenſible,
A louing God, vnto his ſeruants kind,
And in his humane nature ſenſible:
In wiſedomes wonder, knowledge, quinteſſence,
And in that Eſſence higheſt excellence.

The high Creator of all Creatures liuing,
The ſweet Redeemer of his ſeruants loſt,
The glorious grace, all grace and glory giuing,
The ioy of ioyes, that glads the Spirit moſt:
The loue of life, and life of loue indeed,
Gainſt death and hell, that ſtands the ſoule in ſteed.

His ſeat is Heauen, the Earth his foot-ſtoole is,
His chiefeſt dwelling with his ſoules elected,
His ioy to loue, and to be lou'd of his,
His fauour, life, vnto his loues affected:
His Word is Truth, which doth the Spirit try,
Where fruitfull faith ſhall liue, and neuer die.

His bleſſing is the peace of conſcience,
His comfort, mercies contemplation,
His precious gift, the Spirits patience,
His mercy, Vertues meditation:
His grace the Oyle that kils the Spirits euill,
His death the life that did ſubdue the Deuill.

His Garments are the ſundry ſorts of graces,
His Tribute is but ſinners ſacrifice,
His worke the planting vertues in their places,
His gaine the loue of humble ſpirits ſeruice:
His Muſicke Pſalmes, which Angels neuer ceeſe
To ſing, in glory of the God of Peace.

This King of Peace, this King of life and loue,
VVho in himſelfe doth all and onely hold
The higheſt bleſſing of the hearts behoue,
That faithfull truth hath to the Spirit told:
This is the ſubſtance of my ſoules delight,
Vnworthy ſubiect of his worth to write.

Yet as his mercie will vouchſafe his grace,
VVith intercceſsion of his high aſsiſtance,
Againſt the power that would my thoughts deface,
And proudly make againſt the Soule reſiſtance:
I will a little giue his loue a tuch,
Whoſe ſmalleſt praiſe is for my pen too much.

VVha

What loue was that which made him like Man beſt
Of all the workes that euer he created?
What loue againe did in that liking reſt,
To loue him ſo he neuer can be hated?
What loue was more, to giue the Man a Wife?
What loue was more, to dye to giue him life?

The Earth within with ſiluer, gemmes and gold,
Without with trees and herbes, and fruits, and flowers,
The water deepe, where fiſhes keepe their hold,
The Elements with all their inward powers:
Theſe hath my Loue all made for man to chuſe,
And to his pleaſure in his ſeruice vſe.

The fire was made to kill the chilling cold,
The water made to make the burning heat,
The ſubtill ayre a ſecret breath to hold,
The earth to dry when moiſture is too great:
Theſe croſſe in natures, yet doe meet in one,
Onely to ſerue the vſe of man alone.

Each Bird, each Beaſt, each Fowle, and euery Fiſh,
The fleſh of Man muſt ſerue to cloathe and feed:
VVhat eye can ſee, or heart of man can wiſh,
But ſome way ſerues to ſtand poore man in ſtead?
And for that cauſe their beeing firſt began,
From mercies loue, to ſerue the life of Man.

The light was made to glad the lightſome eye,
The ſound, to pleaſe the pure attentiue eare;
The ayre, to draw a liuing breath thereby;
The Earth, the body and the limbes to beare:
The Clouds, the Stars, the Sun, the Moone, the Skie,
Were made for Man, to make him looke on hie.

All theſe were made out of the midſt of Loue:
Was neuer loue came euer neere to this,
Which doth a wonder in affection proue,
Euen when we leſt deſeru'd this loue of His:
For when our ſoules did moſt offences doe him,
He came himſelfe in loue to call vs to him.

To make, redeeme, preſerue, defend, and cheriſh
His faithfull ſoule, and ſo in loue to nouriſh,
As in his loue their liues ſhall neuer periſh,
But like the Lillie liue and euer flouriſh.
Are theſe not points ſufficient to approue
The true affection of a Peereleſſe Loue?

Yet more to ſay, that truely may be ſaid
In humble honour of this heauenly Loue,
In mercies ſweet to make the ſoule diſmaid,
To ſee the bleſſing of this God aboue:
The louing Spirit liuely to refreſh,
He let his ſeruants ſee him in the fleſh.

To

To ſee him ſo as might not hurt their ſight:
For none might ſee his high ſupernall power,
But in his loue to ſee that glorious light,
That gaines that ſweet that cuts off euery ſowre:
The ſecond perſon of himſelfe, his Sonne,
In whom are all things to his glory done.

And ſee the cauſe why ſo he came vnto vs,
His onely loue, the only cauſe we liue:
And when he came, what comfort did he doe vs?
To ſaue our liues, his Loue his life did giue:
And ſo to ſaue vs from the fire of Hell,
That with his Loue we might for euer dwell.

What Loue was this, to leaue his heauenly ſeat,
Among his Angels all in glory ſerued,
To come to Man, who did too ill intreate
The ſacred Loue, that had his loue preſerued:
From being honour'd, praiſ'd and glorifide,
To be diſgraced, whipt, and crucifide.

In loue he left his higheſt heauenly pleaſures,
Aboue his Angels in their heapes of ioyes,
To liue on earth in ſorrowes without meaſures,
With change of nothing but the Worlds annoyes:
In toyle and trauell long in loue he ſought vs,
And with his death at laſt full dearely bought vs.

Oh wofull trauell that he vndertooke,
To bring our liues vnto his ſacred Loue!
Which paine, nor Croſſe, nor death it ſelfe forſooke,
That to our faith might his affection proue:
Which left the Spirit of his Loue behind him,
To ſhew the loue that ſeekes him, how to finde him.

In loue he came, that he might comfort doe vs,
In loue went from vs to prouide vs places,
In loue he ſent his Comforter vnto vs,
In loue he guides vs with his holy graces:
In loue he made, bought, keeps and guides vs thus,
And ſhall not we loue him that ſo loues vs?

Yes, my deare Lord, be thou my deareſt Loue,
For Chriſt his ſake let my ſoule neuer leaue thee,
Who in thy loue thy liuing Truth doth proue,
That makes me proue the world doth all deceiue me:
And were there truth on earth, as there is none
Yet were thy Loue the ioy of life alone.

And let theſe teares be witneſſe of my loue,
Which firſt doe beg remiſsion of my ſinne,
And in repentance doe but mercie moue,
To ope the gates of Grace, and let me in:
Where humble faith but at thy feet doth fall,
With my ſoules ſeruice, loue, and life and all.

Forget

Forget, O Lord, my workes of wickednesse,
Whereby my ſoule with ſorrow is oppreſſed,
And with the finger of thy holineſſe,
In mercy touch my ſpirit ſo diſtreſſed:
And ſaue my life, that draweth nigh to hell:
Loue me a little, and I ſhall be well.

Loue? no, ſweet Lord: mercie I craue, no more;
My ſinnes are ſuch, I dare not ſpeake of loue;
But in thy mercie, to thy life reſtore
My humble faith, that may but mercie proue:
And ſo approue, that all the world may ſee,
The ioyfull loue betwixt my God and me.

Oh call me home, and make me heare thy call,
And heare thee ſo, that I may runne vnto thee,
And hold me faſt, that I may neuer fall,
But that my Soule may euer ſeruice doe thee:
Shew ſome good token, that the world may know,
My ſoule is bleſt, whom thou haſt loued ſo.

And while I liue here in this wretched vale
Of dreadfull danger of infernall death,
Where Earthly pleaſures take thoſe ſoules to ſale,
Which haue their bargaine in the hell beneath:
Let my Soules loue, and life, and labour be,
to ſeeke my ioy, my loue, and life in thee.

Make me not rich, leſt I forget to thinke
From whence I haue the comfort of my heart:
Nor in ſuch want let thy poore ſeruant ſinke,
That I be driuen to craue the needy part:
Giue me but meanes the needy to relieue,
To feede thy flocke, and not the Wolfe to grieue.

Let me not liſten to the ſinners ſongs,
But to the Pſalmes thy holy Saints doe ſing,
Nor let me follow Tyrants in their wrongs,
But kiſſe the Rocke where righteouſneſſe doth ſpring.
Let not mine eye affect the outward part,
But let me loue the vertue of the heart.

And let my loue bee, to behold thy loue,
And let my loue be but to liue in thee,
And ſo to liue, that all the world may proue
The gracious good my God hath done for me.
To call my ſoule out of this World of wo,
In faithfull loue to ſerue my Sauiour ſo.

And when they ſee the blot of all their blame,
To loue the World but all in wretched toyes,
And doe confeſſe with inward bluſhing ſhame,
They are but ſorrowes vnto heauenly ioyes:
They may with me forſake all worldly pleaſure,
And make thy Loue an euerlaſting treaſure.

For,

For, Lord, by thee we are, in thee we liue,
And in thy loue the liuing cannot die,
And ſince thy death did our liues wholly giue,
For thy loues ſake ſhall wee affliction flye?
No, my deare Lord, let life be death to me,
So I may dye, to liue in loue with thee.

A ioyfull life were ſuch a death indeed,
From earthly paine to paſſe to heauenly pleaſure,
A ioyfull line for louing hearts to reade,
To leaue the fleſh, to take the Spirits treaſure:
Whoſe glorious ſence vnto the Sunne doth fall,
That all is nothing to that All in all.

And I (alas) of many thouſand ſoules,
Vnworthy moſt of his high worth to write,
Who in his mercies true record inroules
The louing ſubſtance of the Soules delight;
Muſt mercie cry, for feare of loues preſuming
Of too high ſence, may be my ſoules conſuming.

And with the teares of true repentant loue,
Looking vpon the wonders of that Wonder,
That in his leaſt affection may approue
The greateſt wonder of the world put vnder:
Confeſſe my wit as ſhort to pen his praiſe,
As darkeſt nights in light of cleereſt dayes.

And say but this in grace and glories height,
Where Vertues loue doth liue for euer crowned,
And all the Hoſt of heauen and heauens await,
Vpon the higheſt of the heauens renowned:
Whom Saints and Angels trembling to adore,
To him alone be praiſe for euermore.

All honour, praiſe, and glory euer bee
Vnto my louing euerlaſting King:
This King of life, who ſo hath loued mee,
To giue my ſoule this gratious power to ſing
In heart and mind, in man and Angels loue,
All glorious glory be to God aboue.

FINIS.